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silver moon has made the stars
her level rays like golden bars
lie on the landscape green
with shadows from between
and silver white the river gleams
as if Pleasure in her dreams
had stripped her silken bow
upon the meadows low
on which a fragrant fragrant as the
the water Evangeline with a thr
Waits sleeping in the grove
the dreamed rest of her life
Love Dreams has mastered mine
Love gives all, but is not taught
How vows, nor bound betrays
Its deep impressions gave
It comes, — the beautiful, the free
The crown of all humanity
In silence and alone
To seek the Eternal one
It lifts the boughs where birds are
the Lyre of Orpheus, the sound
And Rachel mourning
It turns to Olympus

O Heaven, heavy heart," C. Stansbury cries!
O Aching Breast, but vainly throbs the throes
Are fraught with fear and pain
Ye shall be loved again."

No cruel fate can recompense the pain,
No time so utterly destroy,
But some sweet thought, though sometimes
Responds unto the soul.

Responds, as if with unseen wings
An angel touched its quivering strings
And whispers, in its song
"Where hope lives again, Despair must die

ENDYMION.

ENDYMION.

—

A TALE OF GREECE.

BY

HENRY B. HIRST,

AUTHOR OF "THE PENANCE OF ROLAND," "THE FUNERAL OF TIME,"
AND OTHER POEMS.

BOSTON:

WILLIAM D. TICKNOR & COMPANY.

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TO HONOURABLE WILLIAM D. KELLEY.

My Dear Friend:

The regard which has subsisted between us for years, not only in our brotherhood at the Bar, but in our social career, will gather, I am sure, no additional strength from this trifling evidence of my friendship. We have labored together, and your success in life—an earnest of a brilliant future—is a happy illustration of the fact that there is no nobility like that of toil.

Permit me, my dear sir, not only as an author, but as a friend, to commence this volume with your name. I do so, trusting that the gift will be received in the same fraternal and affectionate spirit with which it is tendered.

Always yours,

Henry B. Hirst.

Philadelphia, April 1st, 1848.

WOR 20JUN 34

PREFACE.

In offering to the public the following poem, now first completed, the first canto having been already published in the "Southern Literary Messenger," July 1844, it is right that I should premise a few words of explanation, and, perhaps, defence.

My friend, N. P. Willis, in the "Weekly New Mirror," July 27th, 1844, and afterward, in his "Ephemera," while reviewing the first canto in terms of very high, and, it may be, undeserved compliment, described it as being written "after Keats." I have had the misfortune — *presumption*, it will probably be termed by some—to choose a subject upon which this eminent poet has produced a more extended and elaborate article; but, however great may be the respect due to the opinion of Mr. Willis, I cannot consent to rest under a charge undoubtedly originating in a cursory examination and the associations awakened by identity of subject.

Before the publication of the first canto, I had never met with the Endymion of Keats, and purposely avoided the perusal of that beautiful poem until the completion of my own, with the express design of escaping the danger of unintentional plagiarism.

This may appear singular; but it is easily explained. Until the age of twenty-three years, I entertained a holy horror of poetry — an almost ludicrous result of an exceedingly prosaic existence; — and, invariably, during the few and distant hours which sterner and less palatable duties permitted me to spend in

study, I "skipped the page" that bore the burden of a verse, through utter parsimony of my most valuable treasure—time. Beyond the classic fathers of the art, speaking in their original tongues, the favorites of the Muses were strangers to me; and if the poetical temperament found any chance for proper development, it was displayed exclusively in a passionate fondness for the study of natural history and the practice of the pencil. The studies of my manhood have been confined to my profession, and it would be safe to say that I have written—*not published*—more English rhyme than I have read.

If, then, resemblances should be detected between the contents of these cantos and any portion of the Endymion of Keats, they are the inevitable consequence of the universal familiarity of that beautiful classical legend, which, as the common property of all, has been seized upon as a theme by two different writers, born of the same Anglo-Saxon race. If such resemblances exist, they are as foreign to the intention as they are to the knowledge or perception of their author.

Endymion was written as a simple tale, founded upon an exquisitely beautiful classical legend — a picture of scenery and passion, without allegorical meaning and divested of all intentional moral. It is cast forth upon the waters of the great stream of literature, to float or disappear, as its intrinsic qualities may determine. Time and the world will test its value, and more than its just desert, as thus decided, will never be claimed for it by one from whom it has beguiled the weariness of a few heavy hours.

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ENDYMION.

CANTO I.

ENDYMION.

CANTO I.

I.

THROUGH a deep dell with mossy hemlocks girded—
A dell by many a sylvan Dryad prest,—
Which Latmos' lofty crest
Flung half in shadow—where the red deer herded—
While mellow murmurs shook the forests grey—
Endymion took his way.

II.

Like clustering sun-light fell his yellow tresses,
With purple fillet, scarce confining, bound,
Winding their flow around
A snowy throat that thrilled to their caresses,
And trembling on a breast as lucid white
As sea-foam in the night.

III.

His fluted tunic swelling, yielding, floated,
Moulded to every motion of his form,
And with the contact warm,
Round charms on which the Satyrs might have glo
Had he been buskined nymph; but, being man,
They loved him like to Pan.

IV.

His girdle held his pipes—those pipes that clearly
Through Carian meadows mocked the nighting
When Hesper lit the vale:
And now the youth was faint, though stepping chee
Supported by his shepherd's crook, he strode
Toward his remote abode.

V.

Mount Latmos lay before him. Gently gleaming,
A roseate halo from the twilight dim
Hung round its crown. To him
The rough ascent was light; for, far off, beaming,
Orion rose,—and Sirius, like a shield,
Shone on the azure field.

VI.

Yet he was faint—faint with fatigue and drooping.
Through the long day unwearied he had kept
Watch, while his cattle slept;
And now the sun was like a falcon stooping
Down the red west, and Night from out her cave
Walked, Christ-like, o'er the wave.

VII.

And from the south—the yellow south, all glowing
With blandest beauty—came a gentle breeze,
Murmuring o'er sleeping seas,
Which, bearing dewy damps, and lightly flowing
Athwart his brow, cooled his hot brain, and stole
Like nectar to his soul.

VIII.

Endymion blessed the wind; his bosom swelling
As his parched lips drank in the luscious draught;
His eyes, even while he quaffed,
Brightening; his stagnant blood again upwelling
From his warm heart; and freshened, as with sleep,
He trod the rocky steep.

IX.

At last he gained the top, and, crowned with splendor,
The moon, arising from the Latmian sea,
Stepped o'er the heavenly lea,
Flinging her misty glances, meek and tender
As a young virgin's, o'er his marble brow
That glistened with their glow.

X.

Beside him gushed a spring that in a hollow
Had made a crystal lake, by which he stood
To cool his heated blood—
His blood yet fevered, for the fierce Apollo
Throughout the long, the hot, the tropic day,
Embraced him with his ray.

XI.

Beside the lake whose waves were glassily gleaming,
A willow stood in Dian's rising rays,
And from the woodland ways
Its feathered, lance-like leaves were gently streaming
Along the water, with their lucent tips
Kissing its silver lips.

XII.

nd still the moon arose, serenely hovering,
Dove-like, above the horizon. Like a queen
She walked in light between
he stars—her lovely handmaids—softly covering
Valley and wold, and mountain-side and plain,
With streams of lucid rain.

XIII.

ndymion watched her rise, his bosom burning
With princely thoughts, for though a shepherd's son
He felt that Fame is won
y high aspirings; and a lofty yearning,
From the bright blossoming of his boyish days,
Made his deeds those of praise.

XIV.

ke her's, his track was tranquil: he had gathered
By slow degrees the glorious, golden lore,
Hallowing his native shore;
ıd when at silent eve his flock was tethered,
He read the stars, and drank, as from a stream,
Great knowledge from their gleam.

XV.

And so he grew a dreamer—one who, panting
For shadowy objects, languished like a bird
That, striving to be heard
Above its fellows, fails, the struggle haunting
Its memory ever, for ever the strife pursuing
To its own dark undoing.

XVI.

And still the moon arose, and now the water
Gleamed like a golden galaxy, star on star;
And down, deep down, afar
In the lazulian lake, Latona's daughter
Imaged, reclined, breathing forth light, that r
Like mist at evening close.

XVII.

Endymion yet was heated: sudden turning,
He loosed the clusters of his hyacinth hair,
And shook them on the air;
Laid down his pipes; unbound his girdle, burning
The while with August heat; his tunic now
He drew above his brow.

XVIII.

ıere, in the moon-light radiantly gleaming,
Lovely as morn he rose; the swelling veins
Seeming like purple stains
ong his limbs, which, like a star's, were streaming
Serenest light, as lustrously he stood,
Reflected in the flood.

XIX.

ıd now, her purple zenith reaching, brighter
Than ever before, reclined the Queen of Night,
Enchanted with the sight
one whose pure and perfect form was whiter
Than Indian pearl, her bosom's frozen snow
Melting in passion's glow.

XX.

owly Endymion bent, the light Elysian
Flooding his figure. Kneeling on one knee
He loosed his sandals, lea
ıd lake and wood-land glittering on his vision,
A fairy landscape, bright and beautiful
With Venus at her full.

XXI.

His milky feet gleaming in emerald grasses;
The moon-beams trembling on his whiter neck;
His breast without a speck;
While the dense woods around, the mossy masses
Of rudest rock, the bronzed and Titan trees
Looking on Latmian leas,

XXII.

Assumed from him an aspect soft and holy;
For, like a naked God, the shepherd youth
Stood in his simple truth.
At last, with gentle steps retiring slowly,
He paused beside a rude, rough laurel brake,
A bow-shot from the lake.

XXIII.

White-footed, then he passed the crimson clover
Like a swift meteor gleaming on the night,
Streaming in silver light,
His arms uplifted and his hands flung over
His noble head;—a single spring he gave,
Then flashed beneath the wave.

XXIV.

Down, as he sank, a flood of yellow glory
Shot from the moon, as if the moon had dropped
And on the mountain stopped;
And soon the sphere itself, grown grey and hoary,
Its essence gone, slid slowly 'neath a cloud
That wrapped it like a shroud.

XXV.

Then, like a ghost of some unwedded maiden,
On whose pale lips life seemed to strive with death,
Hushing, as 'twere, her breath,
A glorious figure, wreathed with vapor laden
With delicate odors, stood with yearning eyes,
Waiting Endymion's rise:

XXVI.

A crescent on her brow—a brow, whose brightness
Darkened the crescent—and a neck and breast
On which young Love might rest
Breathless with passion; and an arm whose whiteness
Shadowed the lily's snow; a lip the bee
Would swoon on, and a knee

XXVII.

Delicately rounded; while her white feet—glancing
Within her sandals, shed a twilight light
Athwart the purple night.
Cycling her form, a zone whose gems were dancing
With rainbow rays, with perfect love embraced
The white round of her waist.

XXVIII.

Endymion rose and on the water lying
Flung out his arms, sank, rose and sank again;
Pale Dian in her pain,
(For it was Dian's self who watched him,) sighing,
While gazing on him, and her breath came short
And heavy from her heart.

XXIX.

She saw not Eros, who on rosy pinion
Hung in the willow's shadow—did not feel
His subtle, searching steel
Piercing her very soul, though his dominion
Her breast had grown; and what to her was heaven
If from Endymion riven?

XXX.

›thing; for love flowed in her, like a river,
Flooding the banks of wisdom; and her soul,
Losing its self-control,
'aved with a vague, uncertain, tremulous quiver;
And, like a lily in the storm, at last
She sank 'neath passion's blast.

XXXI.

ıe knelt; and thus to awful Jove complaining,
Poured her deep voice upon the night's still ear;—
"Father, dread Father, hear!
ook down upon thy daughter; see her waning
And wasting as the night before the day—
Let not thy child decay!'

XXXII.

Hear me, O! hear me, Thou who swayest the thunder!
I must possess Endymion, or I die.
O! hearken to my cry—
[earken, or I shall perish!—Never was wonder
So great as he; white-breasted, like a God,
He treads the swarthy sod."

XXXIII.

A star shot from the cope of heaven, weaving
Its golden way along the azure air,—
The answer to her prayer!
Then, rising from her knees, her bosom heaving,
Her lips adamp with dew, while through her frame
Discoursed a tingling flame,

XXXIV.

She gazed again upon Endymion, bending
Above him from the willow's lowest limb—
Her radiant eyes as dim
As twilight, when the night is slowly blending
Shadow with shadow, with her heaving breast
Throbbing with sweet unrest.

XXXV.

Waving her hand, straightway, arose a fountain
Dropping pellucid pearl without a sound,
While from the grassy ground,
Along the rill that filleted the mountain,
Around the lake, and in the waving bowers
Budded a myriad flowers.

XXXVI.

The shepherd sought the shore, Dian retreating
Deeper in shadow as he neared the strand.
He touched the mossy land
And stood erect, when, with a heavenly greeting,
The blossom-buds unclosed, and fragrance meet
For Gods rose at his feet.

XXXVII.

Around the mount it rose,—an odor fairer
Than ever mortal flowers had known before—
From the lake's lilied shore—
From the thick grass—diviner, richer, rarer
Than even Olympian light—its vapory chains
Fettering his throbbing veins.

XXXVIII.

Endymion stood entranced, dreaming him dying,
Feeling that heaven was nigh; yet could not see
Dim Dian, for the tree
Shadowed her still; nor could he hear her sighing
For the low ripple of the rill that played
Adown the grassy glade.

XXXIX.

Then, like the music of a pipe low uttered,
When the dim day is drawing to its close,
Floating around him flows
A cadence, gentle as though it were muttered
A mile or more away,—" Endymion, why—
Why hast thou sought mine eye?"

XL.

He turned amazed, and heard the fountain leaping,
And saw the flowers, but Dian saw he not,
For darkness veiled the spot;
While all the while the fragrant scent was steeping
His brain in luscious languor, leading him
Toward Lethe dark and dim.

XLI.

Then sheeted shadows of old stories, buried
Long in his memory, weird, and wan, and pale,
Rose, and with solemn wail,
Told how in Eld were fallen spirits that hurried
At twilight from their caves, with spells to win
Man's erring soul to sin.

XLII.

He turned to fly, but feared the demon's anger
And paused; then knelt, and, murmuring a prayer,
Rose with a feeble air
And turned to fly again; but now the languor
That bound his limbs had so oppressive grown
He stood—save trembling—stone.

XLIII.

Flowing the fragrance rose—as though each blossom
Breathed out its very life—swell over swell,
Like mist along the dell,
Wooing his wondering heart from out his bosom—
His heart, which like a lark seemed slowly winging
Its way toward heaven, singing.

XLIV.

Dian looked on: she saw her spells completing,
And signing, bade the sweetest nightingale
That ever in Carian vale
Sang to her charms, rise, and with softest greeting
Woo from its mortal dreams and thoughts of clay
Endymion's soul away.

XLV.

Endymion, wondering, struggled—never dreaming
What lulled his senses—when a burst of song
Swept like a stream along
The enchanted air, flooding the landscape gleaming
With liquid light, and sinking in his ears
'Till his eyes swam with tears.

XLVI.

He saw no more; those bright orbs shut: entrancing
Dim, indistinct, but loveliest visions slid
Beneath each fringéd lid:
Music was in his heart, his pulses dancing
Like Nereids to a shell; and violet sleep
Took him in gentlest keep.

XLVII.

He stood a moment, then in silence sinking,
Slumbered unconscious on the odorous bloom,
When, from the willow's gloom,
Her jewelled zone unbound, her large eyes drinking
Rapturous joy, with softest love entranced
Dian in light advanced.

XLVIII.

Like the freed soul when death's last pang is over,
Standing contemplating the breathless clay
Before she soars away
Through starry spheres, so Dian o'er her lover,
Wreathed with the mist purpureally bright,
Stood, trembling with delight.

XLIX.

Endymion stirred; his bosom swelled, for near it
His heaving heart averred there stood the one
He thence should love alone;
And though his lips were moveless, still his spirit
Spoke with a lute-like voice, ringing and clear,
To her secrétest ear.

L.

"Divinest Dian, lily-breasted Dian!
Look down on me and bless me with thy love,
Thou! that hast round me wove
Such heavenly dreams, that, though a simple scion
Of one thy radiant peers may deem a clod,
I seem to grow a God!"

LI.

She glanced above; the curious stars seemed brighter;
Peering with laughing eyes; and whispers crept
From where the woodlands slept;
The flowrets shook; the very night grew lighter;
The lake seemed smiling at her, 'till her frame
Tingled and blushed with shame.

LII.

She waved her rosy fingers; gently swelling,
Rose from the lake, the fountain and the ground,
A mist which sailed around
Shrouding the scene, flowing and floating, swelling
In fitful forms, wave over wave, on high
Spirally to the sky.

LIII.

Orange and amethyst, emerald and yellow,
Crimson, and violet deep yet dimly blue
As heaven's cerulean hue,
It rose; and then a cadence sweet and mellow
Fell on his ravished ears,—"Unveil thine eyes!
Endymion—Love!—arise!"

ENDYMION.

CANTO II.

ENDYMION.

CANTO II.

I.

What time the lessening stars, like ghosts, were paling
Before the growing influence of the dawn,
Gradually waxing wan—
What time, like Carthaginian galleys sailing
O'er sun-lit seas, the clouds an amber stain
Flung on the Latmian main,

II.

Slumbering Endymion lay,—his white arms folded
Over his whiter chest; while, like a girl's,
His long and golden curls
Diademed a form that even in sleep seemed moulded
The Ideal of a God, left ere the hand
Creating, bade it stand.

III.

Instinct with heavenly essence; and his bosom
Arose and fell as heaves and falls the sea;
And round his lips the bee
Hovered enchanted, for, as from a blossom,
The delicate perfume of his odorous breath
Curled in a misty wreath.

IV.

Sudden the sun-light came, and, shining o'er him,
Kissed him upon his sleeping eyes, and flew,
Dancing along the dew,
Toward the swart shadows of the grove before him,
That trembled to it. He awoke:—But where
His Goddess? Gone in air!

V.

He sprang erect,—a thousand dew-drops glancing
From off his limbs, like showers of stars that sink
From the empyrean's brink,—
And standing, like a statue, unadvancing,
Gazed slowly round, his wondering soul aghast,
Seeking to grasp the Past.

VI.

Was he awake? for lo! the laurelled mountain
Remained unchanged, as cycles since it frowned,
With hoary hemlocks crowned:
And mist and buds and flowers and bird and fountain
Had faded, flown or sunk. His sense half gone,
Endymion stood alone.

VII.

He saw the moon, mild, meek and melancholy,
Sink 'neath the arrows of the sun, and wane;
And heard the throstle's strain
Rise from the valley, while, like one that slowly
Wakes from a dream, and by degrees perceives
He slept, and so believes

VIII.

All the creations of his sleep a vision,
And still is loth to believe it, with his mind
Veering like April wind,
He stood in doubt, half-thinking the Elysian
Delights he had enjoyed, the fitful theme
Of a distempered dream.

IX.

And then he paused. Were the ethereal kisses
Whose flame yet fired his veins, the wild embrace,
When, trembling, face to face
He stood with Dian, the ecstatic blisses
Maddening his memory—fancies? Fancies! No!
Too fervent was their glow!

X.

It was no dream. Around his senses flowing
Was music not of earth: his very heart
Strove struggling to dispart,
So full was it of heaven: his soul seemed growing
A Titan's, striving in its strength to break
Its fetters, and awake

XI.

Again in Dian's presence. Like an eagle
That, caged, repines, he strove to rend his bars
And soar unto the stars.
Wild dreams and wilder hopes of glories regal
Flashed o'er his soul, and glancing proudly back,
He scorned his shepherd track.

XII.

Why was this sudden, this sublimed emotion,
Were all a dream? Whence was his soul so full—
He being clay so dull—
Of high aspirings, that it heaved, an ocean,
Leaping impetuous toward the sapphire skies
Which seemed to bid it rise?

XIII.

It was no dream; but yet his human spirit
Felt blind, as one feels when a sudden light
Breaks on the eyes at night:
Weak in the consciousness of his own demerit,
He could not compass what the gods had given,
And paused in sight of heaven.

XIV.

But like the youthful eagle that, when gazing
First on the sun, covers his eyes, yet turns
To where the bright orb burns,
Soaring with veiléd lids, meeting its blazing
At last, unconquered: so, Endymion's soul
Finally grasped its goal.

XV.

Sighing he sought his flock. The partridge whirring
Sprang at his feet unheard; the wood-birds made
Meadow and glen and glade
Merry with melody; hares, from slumber stirring,
Pattered athwart his path; and through the trees
Swam swarms of buzzing bees.

XVI.

But all unnoticed. Over the dewy meadows
His herd ran races—stopping, cropped the grass,
Or, pausing o'er the glass
Of crystal streams, beheld their snowy shadows,
Bleating to find themselves reflected there,
It seemed, afloat in air.

XVII.

Unheeding all, the listless shepherd threw him
Among the shadows of an aged tree.
Around the grassy lea
His friends were sporting: yet his feelings drew him
From merriment to muse in solitude:
On the sweet past to brood.

XVIII.

e heard their songs, their reedy pipes, unheeding
Or song or strain, and saw them in the dance;
And yet, like one in trance,
ho sees what passes, yet whóm sleep is leading
Away from knowledge, lay, his busy brain
Throbbing with thoughts of pain.

XIX.

t last, all missed him, and at once discerning
His distant form, wondered why he that led
Their mirth should lie with head
id in his hands, and, as it were, inurning
Himself in shadow. At once their songs were ended,
Their sylvan sports suspended.

XX.

Chromia," quoth one, "Endymion, whom thou lovest,
Shrouds him from sight. What is it thou hast done
To wound our gentle one?
rt thou so cruel that with scorn thou provest
His fervent faith, and leavest him alone
To silence making moan?"

XXI.

"Go to him, Chromia, and with bland beguiling
Woo him to dance with us." The maid replied,—
"Alas! I am decried!
Last night my white-browed lover left me, smiling;
The morn, deserting me, he shuns my eye—
O! Jove, that I might die!"

XXII.

But still she went, though very sad and drooping,
Toward the day-dreamer, who apparently slept,
And slow and noiselessly stept
Where he reclined; when, gradually stooping,
She kissed his pallid brow. His cheeks alight
Crimson with deep delight,

XXIII.

Deeming her Dian, he rose, his glances flowing
With streams of passionate love; but seeing wh
stood
Before him, all his blood
Rushed to his brow. Coldly, like one unknowing
Who it was came, he turned in sullen scorn,
Leaving the maid forlorn.

XXIV.

Chromia looked on him, all her frame congealing
Slowly to stone. Pale, palsied, mute, aghast,
Statue-like, as he passed,
She stood; and for so long, that each one feeling
All was not well, ran toward her; when she turned,
And each, at once discerned

XXV.

That she was mad; for her large eyes ran o'er them
Unconscious, blankly, and like those of death:
Heaving a long-drawn breath,
Sudden she turned, and, shrieking, fled before them.
Some followed her affrighted; others went
To the youth in wonderment.

XXVI.

He stood awaiting them,—imperial, stately,
And like a God. Stricken with awe they gazed,
As, like twin comets, blazed
His lurid eyes. He spoke; they wondering greatly;
For in his voice and language dwelt a strange
And sad, but noble change.

XXVII.

"Shepherds," said he, "what would ye with me?" turning
Upon them all the terror of his eyes.
"What thoughts within ye rise?
See ye aught strange in me?" "Your cheeks are burning,"
Quoth one, "with feverish flame. Where have you been?
What awful horror seen?

XXVIII.

"Tell us, Endymion!" And they bent to listen.
Endymion, breathing long, replied, "I will!
Upon the Latmian hill,
Where, as ye know, the moon-beams soonest glisten,
The twilight saw me standing near the lake
That sleeps beside the brake.

XXIX.

"Flushed with the heavy heat, I thought the water
Would cool my languid limbs: so, doffed my dress
And sought the waves' caress.
Just then, the moon, Latona's stainless daughter
Rose o'er my head—what time I swam is lost,
My soul's so passion-tost!

XXX.

"But when I reached the shore, all scents excelling,
Strange sweets beguiled my senses; silver strains
Seemed swimming through my veins.
All round were flowers. There leapt a fountain welling
Through velvet mosses, showering pearly flame.
Suddenly swam my name,

XXXI.

"Pronounced in golden song, as said in sorrow;
And then I fainted. But my swoon brought dreams,
Such lustrous, dazzling dreams—
So great, so grand, that never more a morrow
I sought to see; for in them, wreathed with light,
Great Dian blessed my sight!"

XXXII.

Endymion paused, for (while all stood in wonder,)
The day grew slowly dark; but still he spake,
And as his utterance brake
Clear on the solemn silence, sudden thunder
Rolled through the skies; and yet the youth went on,
Though all around were wan.

XXXIII.

"She stood before me, with her snowy bosom
Naked and throbbing; passion in her eyes;
Assailing me with sighs.
A strange, wild hope began to bud and blossom
Within my brain, and, though the child of Jove,
I wooed her for my love.

XXXIV.

"She seemed irresolute, but suddenly waving
Her heavenly hand, a mist rose slowly round,
Shrouding the enchanted ground.
She bade me rise"—"Endymion, thou art raving!"
Exclaimed the shepherds, shaken with awful fear
Lest She he should revere

XXXV.

Would smite him dead. Endymion's face seemed clouded
That they believed not, but it passed. "Though sad,"
Said he, "I am not mad,
Nor do I rave. There, as I told ye, shrouded
With clouds were we—I, sleeping; she, awake—
And, as I said, she spake,

XXXVI.

Bidding me rise. My soul at once departed
Out of my body. That which was my soul,
Defying all control,
ressed Dian to its breast——" That moment darted,
Endymion speaking, such a lightning flash,
And burst so loud a crash

XXXVII.

f thunder, that the shepherds fled affrighted
From the blasphemer, fearing they should share
His death or his despair;
/hile he, discerning that his words invited
This ominous change, yet ignorant why, dismayed,
Sank on his knees, and prayed.

XXXVIII.

Hear me, O! Dian! If 'tis thou that speakest,
Hear me!" he cried. "'Tis better I should die
Than meet thy angry eye.
et fall thy bolts, if my poor life thou seekest:
Adoring thee, I still will bless the blow
That lays my manhood low.

XXXIX.

" It will be sweet to fall by thee, and dying
I shall know greater bliss than life can give,
Since it is hell to live
Fired by these new desires—this high o'er-flying
Of earth's realities: then, if as my soul
Brings me to think, my goal

XL.

" Shall be some sphere beyond the intensest azure,
Where, with thy Nymphs, 'neath jewel-fruited t
On emerald-gleaming leas,
Thou passest all thy hours in sylvan pleasure,
Hunting ethereal deer, there shall I be
Happiest, beholding thee!

XLI.

" But if, as doubters say, the grave's the portal
That opens only on chaotic gloom,
Then shall I in my tomb
Forget thee and forever, O! immortal,
Supernal Dian, who even now lookest down
On me, with awful frown."

XLII.

s if the Goddess heard, and hearing, heeded,
And heeding, pitied love so wild and deep,
The tempest sank to sleep;
hen, as the gloomy ground puts forth the beeded
And sapphire violets at winter's death, the clouds
Doffing their funeral shrouds

XLIII.

nd folding solemnly their sombre pinions,
Let out the blue between; then slowly slid
From sight, and sinking, hid,
here in the darkness of their dense dominions
Stalk the grim, gaunt and ghastly ghosts of Old,
Thin, weak and icy cold.

XLIV.

ıy faded; and the purple sun-set slowly
Threw heavenly splendors o'er the earthly scene;
A spiritual mien,
othing, subdued, serene, soft, solemn, holy,
Shedding on all, giving each heart full quiet,
Save his, where love ran riot.

XLV.

Sadly Endymion wandered o'er the valley,
Through slowly darkening woods, by black
streams,
'Till Phœbus his last beams
Cast on the tree-tops. Ceasing then to dally,
He mounted Latmos: and at last, again,
Stood on its summit plain.

XLVI.

Trembling with hope and fear, he stood, while gri
Darkness descended—Darkness, child of Nigl
With slowly circling flight,—
And watched the East, where, distantly and dimly
The moon, through ebon gloom, of splendor sl
Arose, weak, wan and worn.

XLVII.

Throughout the heavens were rifts of clouds that d
Hurriedly o'er her face, and all the stars,
Save the stern planet Mars,
Had shrunk from sight; but when the gloom was lif
As soon it was—one, here and there, alone,
With sickly lustre shone.

XLVIII.

ıdymion stood and watched, his spirit shrouded
With gloom like to a pall, as the moon rose
Coldly, the while he froze;
ɔr, from the icy North, dark, raven-clouded,
Shrilled gusts of wind that chilled him, and he grew
As stone beneath the dew.

XLIX.

owly his senses left him and he fainted;
And as he fell, there, spectral, wan and pale,
Stood Dian with a wail
ı her blue lips, and cheeks that seemed as painted
With stripes of scalding tears; and from her brow,
In damp, dishevelled flow,

L.

embled her tresses, while her frame was shaking
With gusts of grief. All ghostly stood she there,
A form of thinnest air,
aking deep moans, but thinking not of waking
The senseless youth. Her pallid hands she wrung,
Then spake with sorrowing tongue.

LI.

"Alas! alas! Endymion," said she, weeping,
"How had I loved thee had thy love been true!
Why, why didst thou undo
Thyself and me? The secret in thy keeping
How durst thou breathe? Ah! me, my silver fame
Is stained with spots of shame!

LII.

"Thou wast too vain: I should have known thee better
And cautioned thee. To one that loved thee so,
How couldst thou bring such woe?
Had I been earthly woman, thou my debtor
For favor shown, thou hadst been silent. Well
Thy folly broke the spell;

LIII.

"And, traitor, what remains to thee? A sorrow
That has no end, save death; for, never more
This side the Stygian shore
Shalt thou fold woman's form, or else the morrow
Beholds thee—dead: the lip that lay on mine
Shall know no meaner shrine:

LIV.

This is thy punishment and *mine!* for lonely
Henceforth am I, and if *thy* grief is great?
Think what must be *my* fate,
'ho am immortal. Thine is agony only
Enduring for a day, the woe of earth;
Mine has a loftier birth;

LV.

\nd as the Cimmerian shades of Styx are denser
Than those of Night, so, deeper is my gloom,
And heavier my doom,
being a God, which makes my agony tenser,
And also woman, so my passion wrings
My heart with scorpion stings.

LVI.

\wake, arise Endymion! Henceforth ever
My memory haunts thee, as thy memory me;
And sad one, it must be
o thee a madness; for a fordless river
Shall roar between us: yet, by frequent prayer
(Much may be done by prayer),

LVII.

"This have I won from Jove—that, being haunted
By constant sorrow, if with steadfast faith
(And true love knows no death),
Thou keep'st my image, and with eye undaunted
Meet'st evils which shall compass thee,—in sleep
That shall be sweet, long, deep,

LVIII.

"Still may I cheer thee; and when thou, declining,
Dïest, thy death shall give thee endless youth,
A Godhead and a ruth
For what thou wast; for as the sun reclining
In Indian skies outshines the simple cars
That bear the feeble stars,

LIX.

"So shall thy bliss surpass all earthly blisses:
My love shall overgrow thee like a vine;
And shadowing me with thine,
Together through Olympian wildernesses
Wandering, eternity shall waste away
In the waning of a day!"

LX.

ndymion rose, with outstretched hands imploring
Dian to pause; but nothing, save a haze,
Met his astonished gaze.
he amber-circled moon, behind a lowering
And gloomy cloud was sinking: desolate Night
Sat only in his sight.

LXI.

'as this a dream?—This, too, the vague ideal
Of a distempered brain? The wonders growing
Each moment greater, flowing
randly around him, fancies? No, too real,
Too sadly real they!—Blest, he had cast
His bliss in folly past.

LXII.

ırough the dense darkness wearily he wandered
Along, athwart the sacred spot, 'till day
Rose in the Orient way.
ıd then, more calm, but grieving he had squandered
Such holy hopes, he turned and sought the vale,
Even as its lilies, pale.

LXIII.

Treasuring each word his heavenly love had uttered,
And pondering on them, maddening, as he came
Among his friends, a flame
Seemed roaring round him, and his senses fluttered
With too much woe. Tottering he sank and swooned
Upon the grassy ground.

LXIV.

Clustering about him, every eye-lash glistening
With tears of pity—for Endymion
From earliest youth had won
Their simple love,—and bending o'er him, listening
If he still breathed, they leant. Bathing his brow
They saw a rosy glow

LXV.

Creep o'er his cheek. He stirred, and with a shiver
Tremblingly rose. Some brought him wine; some food.
Fiercely he ate, and stood
Again revived, though still a gentle quiver
Ran o'er his limbs; at last his faintness fled.
Sudden a shepherd said,

LXVI.

"Alas, for our Endymion! he hath slumbered
In Dian's rays, and they have woven a strain
Whose sweetness crushed his brain.
Poor moon-struck youth! what happy hours he numbered
With dove-eyed Chromia: now, his bridal bed
Shall only bear him—dead."

LXVII.

"Thou liest!" exclaimed Endymion fiercely. "Try me
If I am mad. Yon is the sky, and thou
Hæphestion; there the brow
Of Latmos kisses heaven; floating by me,
Seeking its sire the sea, yon river flows;
There golden Phœbus glows.

LXVIII.

"Discourse with me, and learn from me that madness
(Even were I mad,) is reason so sublimed
That it is inter-chimed
With Jove's own thoughts. And more! This solemn sadness
At which ye scoff, is offspring of my folly
In whispering secrets holy.

LXIX.

"Ye look on me with wonder, seeing changes
In me from what I was. Well, I *am* changed,
And being so, estranged
From such as ye; for my proud spirit ranges
Beyond the stars, basks in Olympian light
And scorns its pristine night.

LXX.

"Chromia!—I loved her once—Alas, sweet maiden
Whose soul, so lily-white, bowed down to mine
As to high Here's shrine!
Great is my grief that I must leave her laden
With swarthy sorrow; but it is her fate:
I, too, am desolate!"

LXXI.

And like a child succumbing to emotion
Endymion wept, but with a haughty heart
Strode silently apart,
Covering his face. At once a loud commotion
Ran through the crowd, and threats and savage cri
Rose fiercely toward the skies.

LXXII.

Proudly he turned, and stern, and smiling coldly?
With lofty scorn illumining his face,
"Death!" said he, "'Twill erase
The bitter Past. Shepherds, behold how boldly
I stand to meet it." As he spoke a strain
Of harmony swept the plain.

LXXIII.

It was a hymn which, faint and far, ascended
To awful Jove,—a prayer of peace—and slowly,
Arrayed in vestments holy,
Appeared the priests, who, at first sight seemed blended
Like shadows with the shadows of the wood.
In the stern throng they stood.

LXXIV.

Astonishment imprinted on each feature,
They gazed around; but when the patriarch learned
The cause of tumult, burned
His sacred eyes uplifted. "Guilty creature,"
He murmured, trembling, "speak! and speak the truth:
Else dream not of my ruth!"

LXXV.

"Father," replied Endymion, "though I humbly
Acknowledge thy high office—though I feel
Thy simple word can seal
My future fate—still, like a statue, dumbly
I must remain before thee: yet, to thy decree
Shall bend my willing knee."

LXXVI.

"Thou hast blasphemed, proud boy!" "No, father, never!
Truth is not blasphemy. Thy Gods and mine
Acknowledge it divine.
The past is mine and must remain so ever,
The rest I leave to heaven. Now, work your will,
I can be patient still."

LXXVII.

The aged patriarch stood in silent wonder—
Silent with rage—while from the angry crowd
A murmur growing loud
As the far growling of awakening thunder
Rose hoarsely on the wind. He waved his hand,
And silence ruled the band.

LXXVIII.

Then spake the passionate patriarch,—"Idle, dreaming,
Perverse, blasphemous boy, and mad, begone!
Hence, wander forth alone!
The Gods have punished thee; the fiery gleaming
Of thy great eyes proclaims it. We are free
From sin—so banish thee!

LXXIX.

"Leave us—Accurséd, and by all forsaken!
Repent thy sins. Those that thou scornd'st, in turn,
O! fool! scorn *thee!* Forlorn
In the grey wilderness—if such may be—awaken
Again to sense; and then, to senseless stones
Give penitential groans."

LXXX.

"'Tis just, old man—most just, when over-leaping
Thee and thy fellows with a knowledge they
Call madness—that my way
Should be distinct from theirs. I go, and keeping
All to myself, turn to the wilderness
As to a bride's caress.

LXXXI.

"Farewell! Be kind to Chromia, and remember
Me as one long since dead." With eyes that burned
To weep, Endymion turned
Proudly away, crushing hope's smouldering ember,
And with a stately step walked sternly forth,
A wanderer o'er the earth.

ENDYMION.

CANTO III.

ENDYMION.

CANTO III.

I.

'T was autumn on the mountain: fluttering, falling,
Lifted or sinking on the breeze that rolled
Shrill, sharp and icy cold
From the white North, and low and mournfully calling
One to the other, yellow, golden, brown,
The withering leaves came down.

II.

All round was wasting, save the pines that proudly
Sustained their primal heads, and one stout oak
That, gnarled and mossy, broke
Out of a sheltered hollow, where it loudly
Creaked in the wind: and it seemed stricken; for now
A hoar-frost marked its brow—

III.

An untimely frost, for still the valley greenly
Shone as in summer, while the circling plain
Glittered with grass and grain.
Beside the rivers that were glistening queenly
'Tween dewy banks, were scattered herds of she
Lying in peaceful sleep.

IV.

A cliff looked down upon the valley. Reaching
Across the gulf, a blasted hemlock leant,—
A tree by lightning rent—
Dead ere its time; and on it, faintly stretching
Its feeble neck, a falcon sat alone,
Deserted, making moan.

V.

A hunter's shaft had stricken him, when soaring
Through the blue air; and now, his plumage soi
His limbs of strength despoiled,
He sat, supremely desolate, while roaring
The mountain winds swept round him, bearing
The dead leaves, falling fast.

VI.

'light after flight of crows swept by, descending,
Cawing, seeking the south; and, scarce in sight,
So lofty was their height,
'lew lines of cranes, their shadowy figures blending
Slowly with shadow, till the distant skies
Wrapped them from human eyes.

VII.

'lournfully from the withering woods a moaning
Rose on the wind—the wail of Dryads pale;
And from a mountain dale
'choed the pipe of Pan—Pan, who was groaning
Over the dying season—Satyr Pan,
A God, mourning like man.

VIII.

'here was a crackling of the leaves, and screaming
The falcon proudly strove to soar, but fell
Heavily toward the dell,
's suddenly, while over Latmos gleaming
Trembled the sunrise, in the sylvan scene
Stood one of noble mien.

IX.

He was not old; and yet his hair, though golden,
Was mixed with silver, and his pallid brow
Paler beneath its flow,
Revealed the lingering marks that age or olden
Care had imprinted there: his eyes were fraugl
With sadness and deep thought.

X.

His cheek was ashen-wan; his figure, stooping;
And yet a beauty, like that painters trace
Pourtraying Gods, his face
And form displayed; while, though there was a drooj
About the man, a majesty remained
As in one self-sustained.

XI.

A snowy tunic, edged with gold, was belted
About him, fitting perfectly; while fell,
In many a fold and swell,
A toga from his shoulders, whence, as melted
One with the other, many a glistening gem
Ran rippling down its hem.

XII.

helm was on his brow, a cuirass sparkled
Beneath his robe, and at his girdle hung
A massive sword which rung
ith every movement:—from his helmet darkled
A mass of plumes, that, swaying in the wind,
Drooped gracefully behind.

XIII.

ausing, the warrior stood, perchance retracing
The wastes of memory; and in pensive mood,
Through shadowy glens pursued
ld recollections—like a child, erasing
The present from his mind.——A sudden start—
A heaving of the heart—

XIV.

lifting of the eye-brows, and a gleaming
Of sentient eyes—and suddenly he strode
Adown the rocky road.
'was now broad day. He saw the meadows beaming
With morning light, and far away—so far,
The harmony of a star

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XIII.

Pausing, the warrior stood, perchance retracing
The wastes of memory; and in pensive mood,
Through shadowy glens pursued
Old recollections—like a child, erasing
The present from his mind.——A sudden start—
A heaving of the heart—

XIV.

A lifting of the eye-brows, and a gleaming
Of sentient eyes—and suddenly he strode
Adown the rocky road.
'Twas now broad day. He saw the meadows beaming
With morning light, and far away—so far,
The harmony of a star

XV.

It seemed—floated a shepherd's song, whose falte
Was like his heart's; and with 't he felt the
Of boyish memories rush
Warm to his cheek and brow. As at an altar,
He stood in thought. Recovering, again
He sought the distant plain.

XVI.

Entering the woods that, like an arm enfolding
The mountain's base, spread wide, he he
humming
Of many voices. Coming
Slowly more near, he found the speakers holding
Council, while accents, fraught with timorou
Struck his attentive ear.

XVII.

Parting the interlacing twigs, he stood, surveying
The timid group. The patriarch was there,
Old priests with hoary hair,—
Sages with wrinkled brows,—and youths a Mayi
Party seemed fitter for, than sword or shield
Or strife on the red field.

XVIII.

"Brothers," exclaimed the elder of the sages,
"We are too weak to struggle. Let us send
Envoys, and humbly bend
Before these Phrygians; for their army rages,
Boar-like, around us. We can then enjoy
Our homes with small alloy."

XIX.

"Rather," returned a youth with passion, "drive them
Like deer before us. Know, though we are few,
If we are firm and true—
True to ourselves—our honest hands shall rive them
Of all they rent from us. No tribute! None!
To arms each Carian son!"

XX.

"But who shall lead ye?" asked the sage. "A craven,
Unmanly fear is on us, ignorant as we are
Of deeds, or art of war.
Our peaceful life—watching our flocks—has shaven
Our limbs of strength. Go to, proud boy, be dumb!
'Tis better to succumb."

XXI.

The stranger heard, trembling with rage, his figure
Rising majestic, and his practised hand
Grasped his great brand.
He had been weak, but now a sudden vigor
Coursed through his frame, which quivered wi
his ire:
His very veins were fire.

XXII.

He sprang among them. "Shepherds," said he, "list
And fear not!" But in tremulous amaze
They leapt apart, each gaze
Earnest with dread. "Nay, never let the glisten
Of steel appal ye. At a single blade
Are Latmians thus dismayed?

XXIII.

"Be firm; be brave: I am a friend. Go, gather
Your rusted arms: I'll lead ye! Were your foe
A myriad, rise! and lo!
He falls before ye. Jove is with ye, rather
Sustaining right than might. Yours is the right
What fear ye from the fight?"

XXIV.

He paused. "To arms! To arms!" arose like thunder,
Startling the mountain from its stony sleep;
Whose response, loud and deep,
Broke on their ears, like sound of surf that under
Black, beetling cliffs, breaks on a craggy strand,
Shaking the granite land.

XXV.

Like an old man awoke from midnight slumber,
Pale, palsied, gazing round with tremulous fear,
The forest far and near
Heard it, and trembled. Doubts no more encumber
The shepherd's souls. Each in his brother's eye
Reads courage strong and high.

XXVI.

"But," asked the aged Patriarch, "noble stranger,
Who and what art thou? From what purple shore,
What land with glory hoar,
Comest thou to aid us? Art thou not a ranger
Of the blue spheres? Perchance, majestic Mars,
The warrior of the stars!"

XXVII.

"Who and what am I, or whence come—if mortal
Or God," replied he, smiling, "none may know.
Go; at once, warriors; go
Burnish your arms; and at the forest's portal
Meet me at noon, attired in steel array:
Night sees us far away.

XXVIII.

"Now, soldiers, hence!" Like those that felt, and feelin
The presence of some loftier being, bend
Unquestioning, they wend
Among the trees. Like silent shadows, stealing,
Some, one way, some, the other, they are gone.
The stranger stands alone.

XXIX.

Not long he stands; for soon Apollo, rounding
The mighty globe, flashes his fiercest rays,
Piercing the forest ways.
Time passes, and remembering—lightly bounding;
For love of glory, in that hour, with strength
Endued his limbs—at length

XXX.

He reached the appointed spot,—a sentience swelling
To being in him, that his hand should clasp
Some greatness which his grasp
'Till then had sought in vain. High thoughts came welling,
Like springs in granite, through his soul, which rose
Superior to its woes.

XXXI.

Under a mighty oak, whose noon-tide shadow
Slept at its foot, he musingly reclined
With proud, but pensive mind.
Sudden! a sharp, shrill scream along the meadow
Startled his ears. He rose, as through the sky
Floated that piercing cry.

XXXII.

And, as he sprang erect, a pard, cinque-spotted,
Bearing a lamb, toward the near forest dashed,
Unseeing him, while crashed
The twigs before it, and the leaves, half-rotted,
Crackled beneath its tread. The forest's night
Concealed its further flight.

XXXIII.

Swiftly the stranger followed,—disappearing
In the dense undergrowth. Scarce had he gone,
When slowly, one by one,
Arrived the shepherds, each new-comer peering
In his companion's face with smiles, that there
He saw no shade of fear.

XXXIV.

As yet they stood—the while, their doubts beguiling
With warlike songs, the stranger with the dead
Pard and the lamb, and red
With conflict, came in haste, serenely smiling,
And paused among them. "Friends," said he,
"behold!
This leopard, scarcely cold,

XXXV.

"Attacked yon herd. I saw the deed, and, starting
In swift pursuit, destroyed him. Awful Jove
Regards our acts with love:
This omen breathes it. Follow me, and darting
Like lightning on these Phrygians, win a crown
Of ever-bright renown."

XXXVI.

Responsive rose their cries, the concave rending,
Rousing the echoes; and their brazen shields
Striking, each warrior wields
His massive brand. "Away! The day is blending
With shadowy eve," they shouted. "Let us go:
We burn to face the foe!

XXXVII.

"Revenge or death! We languish for the slaughter!
Hurrah!" The stranger heard, his eye ablaze,
Gleaming with lurid rays,
And wide dilated. "Yes," cried he, "like water,
Spill their base blood: death else to all our band—
Death for your father land!

XXXVIII.

"Now, let us pray." They knelt, with accents solemn,
Entreating Jove; then rose, and gathering, formed,
Each heart with phrenzy warmed,
Proudly before their chief, in serried column.
"Forward!" he cried;—and soon in solitude
Slept the majestic wood.

XXXIX.

Days glided by like dreams; and one sweet morning—
A warm, bright morn in autumn—when the skies
Were placid as the eyes
Of those that watched—when, gloriously adorning
The yellowing plains with golden light, Apollo
Peopled each glen and hollow

XL.

With radiant rays—sudden—far distant—ringing
Arose a clarion's silver note. The sound
Fluttered and floated round,
Like an embodied cloud singing, while swinging
Poised in mid air. The Spirit of the Wind,
Pale Echo—who had pined

XLI.

For days, in dim and silent glades, in sadness,
Wanting the shepherd's songs—took up the strain,
And murmured o'er the plain
Aërial response. Thronging, wild with gladness,
Rushed forth both old and young, and many a maiden
With anxious love o'erladen.

XLII.

Louder arose the clarion's silver thunder;
Louder and prouder; while the listeners gazed
One on the other, 'mazed
With too much bliss; for in its notes, that under
The fretted woods, along the streams, and through
The concave's circling blue,

XLIII.

Floated, was triumph—triumph great and glorious!
And over ancient Latmos flashed the lightning
Of armour grandly brightening
In the red sun. "Io, O! Io! Lo! they come, victorious!
Sisters! away to where the laurel grows!
Bays for our victor's brows!"

XLIV.

Through the green woods they hasten, gathering blossoms
And wreathing chaplets, as the clarion near,
And nearer, and more clear,
Rings on the silence, while their swelling bosoms
Heave to its notes. Loudly the cymbals, ringing,
Clang to the maidens' singing.

XLV.

Then joyously they mingle, while the prancing
Of steeds comes nearer, and the clank of steel,
And trumpet tones that reel
On the clear air; when forth, with dizzy dancing,
And song, and sylvan mirth, they haste to greet
Their friends' returning feet.

XLVI.

Grandly they come: each manly bosom swelling
With glorious joy;—each eye aflame with fire.
Nigher they come and nigher—
Nigher and nigher, 'till each homely dwelling
Stands full in sight; and then, despite their years,
The warriors pause in tears.

XLVII.

But, through the woods, even while their eye-lids glistened,
Swell over swell, arose the welcome home.
And now their kinsmen come,
Chaunting their pæans, as entranced they listened,
Leaning upon their spears; when, loud, a shout
Like thunder leapt from out

XLVIII.

Their trembling lips; the sun-light on their lances
Flashed silver flame, and even the murmuring air,
Delighted, seemed to share
Their joyous madness. Proud each war-horse prances,
Spurning the ground—proudly as though he trod,
Backed by some warrior-god.

XLIX.

The stranger came; gleaming his armour golden;
Snowy his plumes; while from his brow a joyance
Displaced the pale annoyance
That grief or time had made. Like to an olden
Knight of romance, he ruled his restless steed,
Spurring him o'er the mead.

L.

There was a shout of welcome—a commotion
Of many voices—and each loving one
Had singled out her own;
But, like a desert isle in some dark ocean,
Which none, save God has seen, the stranger only
Sat in his glory lonely.

LI.

He signed!—The clarion's voice, like thunder rolling,
Disturbed their joy. Obedient to its call
The soldiers slowly fall
Once more in ranks, with sinewy arms controlling
Their snorting steeds: then, at the word, again
Rode toward their native plain.

LII.

Once more the Latmian shepherds stand assembled,
The priests, the people, and the wrinkled seer
Of many a hoary year,
Sitting in council; while each bosom trembled
Lest he, their warrior, should depart. One rose,—
A man of many snows,—

LIII.

And spake. "Children," said he, "our bold defender,—
Our champion,—he, who was our guard,—
What shall be *his* reward?
We must be just. What is it we can render
To him for these great joys? What joy as great?
What grand—what golden estate?

LIV.

'Remember, that he came when war had kindled
His torches at our hearths—when, weak as deer,
We fled, aghast with fear,
Before our hunters—when our strength had dwindled
To nothing: none to govern; none to guide.
The world, I grant, was wide:

LV.

"Yet, 't was not Caria. What had we been, banished
From our old homes? On what tempestuous strand
Could we have found a land
Which would have welcomed us? He came: woe vanished
Like mist in sun-light. Now, our soil is free
As the unfettered sea.

LVI.

"Shall he depart, then? Sons, it were a story
To sully through all time the Carian name—
A bitter, blighting shame
To dim the grandeur of our novel glory
And blast our triumph. Ay, and should he go,
What then? Our ancient foe

LVII.

"Would once more rush to crush us. Let our voices
Proclaim our thanks; and not in words alone,
But acts. The Carian throne
Let us bestow on him. Each heart rejoices
In his great deeds, and his is our renown.
Yield him the Latmian crown!"

LVIII.

The stranger rose in wonder, tears upstarting
Filling his eyes. He would have spoken, but loud—
As summer thunder loud—
Leapt forth their shouts, like wingéd arrows, darting,
Piercing the skies, as still he stood, and pale:—
"Hail! King of Caria, hail!"

LIX.

But not alone from manly voices rushing
Arose that cry; for many a maiden gave
Her treble to the wave
Which floated o'er him. Every heart was gushing
With rapturous joy, as, gazing o'er the field,
Borne on a brazen shield,

LX.

Their new-made monarch bowed; his glances beaming
With joy as great.—Even while he stood, a maid
Stole slowly o'er the glade—
Slowly and sadly—with her tresses streaming
Dishevelled o'er her robe. Among the throng,
Making her way along,

LXI.

She gazed around with wondering looks, whose meekness
Struck all with sadness, and filled many eyes
With tears, and hearts with sighs.
"Ah! me," said one, "our Chromia! In the weakness
Of love she walks, seeking her banished one,—
Our lost Endymion."

LXII.

Parting, they let her pass, the while, regarding
Them one by one, she stole from man to man,
As pitying murmurs ran
Through all. With patience that deserved rewarding
She wandered unrewarded, desolate,
Succumbing to her fate.

LXIII.

Leaning against an oak, she seemed a spirit,
(For she was white as one, and all as fair,)
As she stood nestling there
Dove-like, love-stricken, and yearning to inherit
Immortal life, that she might once more lie
'Neath dead Endymion's eye.

LXIV.

"Carians," said the monarch, "why encumber
Me with such honors—me,—a stranger, too,
Unknown to all! But do
Even as ye will with me. The soothing slumber,
The dreaming after toil I sought, alas!
I yield. Well, let it pass!"

LXV.

Sudden, the statue-like and silent maiden
Sprang forward as convulsed: her heaving breast
Swelling with wild unrest.
"I take your gift," continued he, "though laden
It is with cares. Henceforward be to me
As I shall be to ye."

LXVI.

Forward, still forward, with a music singing
In ears that heard naught else, she passed. One glance
As if in dizzy trance,
She flung upon the king, whose voice came ringing
Once more around, and then—her lips apart—
Stood silent, save her heart.

LXVII.

The monarch, even as he beheld her, started—
Some mental conflict pictured in his face,
Which showed his mind's wide space
Was filled with doubt and fear. It passed;—and darted,
Like sun-light from a cloud, a smiling glow
O'er lip, and eye, and brow.

LXVIII.

Fixedly he gazed; the maiden, pale and trembling,
And silent: when, while anxious wonder crowned
The looks of all around,
Sudden he turned and spake—it seemed, dissembling
Even with himself, for, with a frown, he said;—
"Whence comes this frantic maid?"

LXIX.

That voice again! 'T was music to her madness!
Eyes, brow, cheeks, lips aflame, she sprang and grasped
His mantle's hem, and clasped
His mailéd knees, and gazed, trembling with gladness,
Up in his face. "Nay! Tell me, gentle maiden!"
His voice with pity laden,

LXX.

Quoth he, "what wouldst thou?" All the while a meaning
Lighting his eyes; and stooping, kissed her cheek.
Gasping, she strove to speak,
Struggling for breath, but could not, faintly leaning
Against him for support; while, as she leant,
A calm and sweet content

LXXI.

Hallowed her features. Every movement weighing,
The shepherds stood astonished; but at last
The aged patriarch passed
Toward the pale maid, and touched her, sternly saying
"Chromia, arise and hence. What means this strain?"
"No, priest! She shall remain!"

LXXII.

Passionately exclaimed the king. "Pale, prostrate blossom!
My hand shall tend her. Priest, I claim her, I,
Her king!—Belovéd, lie
Here, and thy throne shall be this beating bosom.
Well has thy fëalty such guerdon won
From thine Endymion!"

LXXIII.

"Endymion!" cried the patriarch, pale with wonder:
"Endymion!" shrieked the maid. "Yes! yes!
'T is he!
Brothers, behold him! see,
'T is my Endymion!" Like a crash of thunder,
"Endymion!" echoed all. "Endymion!—Hail,
Brother—King—Saviour—Hail!"

ENDYMION.

CANTO IV.

ENDYMION.

CANTO IV.

I.

A grassy dell,—a fragrant spot, secluded
In noiseless woods,—a haunt for sylvan Pan.
Where rarely step of man
Startled the quiet, but where silence brooded
Hushed as a dove,—slumbered in primal peace,
The loveliest glen in Greece.

II.

The air was breathing gently. Trickling, gushing,
Gurgling o'er rocks and moss, a brooklet sang,
Sparkling, whenever it sprang
From out the leafy gloom, its surface flushing
Under the ardent glance of starry eyes,
Scanning it from the skies.

III.

A mossy oak, the Druid of the valley,
Shadowed a basin that for centuries drew
Its food from rain and dew,—
A lonely lake, where Nereids loved to dally,
And Dian's huntresses, at noon-tide, came,
With lips and cheeks aflame.

IV.

Wreathing the oak, a honey-suckle, laden
With coral corymbs, travelled toward its brow.
From limb to limb, and bough
To bough of the tall tree, it stole,—a Dryad maiden,
Clinging with speechless transport to the breast
Where nature bade her rest:

V.

And in their arms, unnoting their emotion,
A dove reposed—his plumage on the night
Making a milky light
Among the sombre leaves. Afar, the ocean,
Low but distinct, broke languidly on the reach
Of the long desolate beach.

VI.

His arm encircling her, just then a mortal,
A mortal maiden with him, reached the glade.
Few were the words they said,
Yet sweet as few. It seemed Elysium's portal
Was open to them, whence, through gates ajar,
Shone love's delicious star.

VII.

Silent as statues were they, save their sighing
And the audible beating of their happy hearts,—
A throbbing that, by starts,
As ever and anon the wind seemed dying,
More felt than heard, swam in each other's ears,
Like hymns from distant spheres.

VIII.

Endymion spoke. "Chromia," quoth he—a brightness
Like that of new-born planets in his eyes—
Tremulous his voice with sighs—
"I am as one entranced. A fairy lightness,
Rare as the fragrance of Olympian plains,
Springs, dancing, through my veins.

IX.

"My brain is drunk with music, floating, flowing,
Sounding like songs of Gods; dim, yet how sweet;
How delicate, but complete;
Like strains the pensive primrose breathes in blowing;
Serene as sounds of kisses that the blue
Violet gives the dew.

X.

"It was not so till now: a passionate gladness,
Born of my old and fervent love for thee,
Thrills me. Each thing I see
Seems lovelier: yet, withal, a sound of sadness
Sighs in my ears—the prescience of a sorrow
To cross me on the morrow."

XI.

Just then the moon rose o'er the mountain, beaming
Bright on his brow. Ere the first shades of even
The orb was high in heaven.
A chill ran o'er him, as her light fell streaming
Pallidly round him, and his brow grew white—
White with unearthly light.

XII.

Ah me, Endymion," gasped the maiden, feeling
The nervous trembling of his icy hand,
"Why, you can scarcely stand!
'hat ails you? You are ill. The dew is stealing
Through your thin robes. Come, hasten toward your home.
Let me conduct you. Come."

XIII.

ven as she spoke, she led him unresisting
And feeble as a child away; but when
The shadows of the glen
oncealed the moon, he paused. The maid persisting,
Had forced him thence, but that a moan of love
Burst from the slumbering dove.

XIV.

gentle sound it was, heartful with gladness,
Which falling on Endymion's sense, like balm,
Produced a pleasing calm:
Vith it, too, vanished Chromia's sudden sadness,
For from her lover's cheek the pallor fled:
Recovering, he said:

XV.

"Let us repose here, Chromia: I am stronger
Though languid still. 'Twas but a spasm—no more.
'Twill not be long before
I am myself again. Prythee, no longer
Afflict thyself. Sit down, my gentle one—
Here—on this mossy stone."

XVI.

Meanwhile, and as the embracing lovers entered
The leafy shade, the planet, pale, but proud,
Retired behind a cloud.
Chromia regarding him in whom was centred
Her earth and heaven, now spake. "Endymion
Dearest and noblest one,

XVII.

"Some mystery surely haunts, unapprehended
By me, thy path. Else, wherefore came this strange
Sudden and sorrowful change?
Perhaps—I see it all—thou hast offended
One of the Gods! Alas! if it be so,
Woe to our future—woe!"

XVIII.

"Not so;" replied Endymion. "Mine is sorrow
Strengthened by time. Never hath mortal man,
Since the first century ran
Its round of gladness, languished for a morrow
Of perfect peace, as I have. Girl! My sadness
Was near akin to madness.

XIX.

"I have sought Lethe; but its ebon waters
Advanced before, receding from my grasp.
How often in their clasp
I sought to sleep! From Night's relentless daughters,
The awful Fates, I have asked death—in vain:
Begged it with burning brain.

XX.

"But this was in the Past, ere I had wrestled,
Despairing, with Despair—when, on yon peak,
While on my woe-worn cheek,
Wooing away my woe with kisses, nestled
The Latmian winds, I heard my sheep-bell's chime
For the last bitter time.

XXI.

"I went my way, my passionate spirit yearning
For action—action—action. All I sought
Was to escape from thought.
Volcano-like, my passionate heart was burning,
Throwing its ashes on my phrenzied brain;
And lava was each vein.

XXII.

"Well! Years rolled by. Over what purple ocea
Over what dim, deserted, desolate strands—
Over what wondrous lands
I passed, is little: through what fierce commotions
I made my way, is less. At last, my home
Was Rome—eternal Rome!

XXIII.

"Behind me was the Tiber. Wide before me
The city spread,—a world of sculptured stone,
Whence sprang a sleepless moan
Of many voices, surging over and o'er me,
Like wakening thunder. Palaces, like trees,
Arose from marbie leas.

XXIV.

"And temples, huge and massy as our mountains,
Cast an eternal shadow on the ground;
And, in that shade, around,
Were marble dragons, strange, ideal fountains,
Whence, with a mighty bound, a sea of spray
Sparkled, and sprang away.

XXV.

"There too the Gods we worship—(O, their glory!)—
From spotless stone by lofty genius wrought,—
Offspring of Titan thought—
Arose gigantic; while, before them, hoary
Sages, and vestals lovelier than the light,
Hymned to them day and night.

XXVI.

"Gold was as iron here, in strange profusion—
The very people kings, and numberless—
So strenuous was the press
Of clustering thousands. And their wild diffusion!
For all the earth seemed congregated there,
To breathe the perfumed air.

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XXVII.

"Their warriors, Chromia! Never, never, never
Had I beheld such men; for, with the sword,
They made great Rome the lord
Of earth and ocean, and a name for ever!
Surge over surge, returning from the wars
They swept, those sons of Mars,

XXVIII.

"Like Deities by me, hailed with shouts, whose thunder
Shook the surrounding walls. And then, their spoils,
Acquired by giant toils,
Rich as your dreams of heaven, girl! Pale with wonder
I saw them sweep away,—a fierce desire
Flooding my soul with fire.

XXIX.

"I grew a warrior; and the mountain eagle
Sprang up among his fellows. Sweeping forth,
Our screams alarmed the earth,
For where we came, came death. The olden, regal
Glories of centuries sank beneath the pinions
Whose wind shook earth's dominions.

XXX.

"But I grew sick of blood, and turned, how gladly
I need not say, toward Caria. Weak and worn—
For strange disease had torn
My frame—in anguish, doubtfully and sadly,
I took my way. Chromia, I came to sigh
My life out here—to die."

XXXI.

"But why," said Chromia, her pale features glowing
With loving pride, "this solemn sorrow? Why,
Endymion, didst thou fly
Thy native land? Surely, some over-flowing
Woe must have swept thy soul. For what didst roam
From our loved Latmian home?"

XXXII.

"Alas!" replied he, "I had forgotten, maiden,
You knew not all—that my inhuman scorn,
When I felt most forlorn,
Had driven you mad. Chromia, my soul *was* laden
With grievous woe. Girl! I was banished—driven
Forth, scorned of earth and heaven!"

XXXIII.

He told his simple tale,—how he saw Dian
And she had blessed him with her love. "A dre
It was," said he—"a gleam
Born of my starry fancy—a sweet scion
Reft from supernal spheres, that, taking root,
Produced such bitter fruit.

XXXIV.

"At first, I deemed it real. There are stories,
Chromia, dim with the dust of age, that tell
How every dewy dell
In golden Greece, hath seen the unveiled glories
Of heavenly beauty—how the very trees,
Shadowing our wood-land leas,

XXXV.

"The brooks, however small, and every river,
Are haunts of spirits, who, it hath been said,
Have often stooped to wed
With earthly beings. Hourly, with a quiver
Through my whole frame, I dreamed that chai
one day
Might throw such in my way.

XXXVI.

"And yet I loved *thee*, Chromia, for, when turning
Desponding from these dreams, thy softness fell
Like dew on me. The spell,
However, grew in strength: my spirit, burning
To clasp the spiritual, turned away
With scorn, from things of clay.

XXXVII.

"In vain, however. And this over-leaping
Of my mortality had power to wring
The soul whose soaring wing
Had else attempted heaven. Forever steeping
My brain in beauty's fountain, it became
A reservoir of flame.

XXXVIII.

"None felt as I felt. Of all griefs the sorest
Is unappreciation; and, bereft
Of sympathy, I left
My fellows for the mighty, mystic forest,
And there in solemn studies strove to find
Tranquillity of mind.

XXXIX.

"The trees spoke to me, and their gentle voices
Lulled me. I raised my eyes to heaven,
And straightway, maiden, was given
To me great knowledge. Over the weary noises
Of earth I heard for many, many years,
The heart-beat of the spheres.

XL.

"Then came my dream of dreams! My spirit, feeding
So long on beauty, brought the vision forth.
Soaring above the earth
I seemed to walk with Gods, from out me weeding,
More than before, my fellowship with man;
This placed me 'neath his ban.

XLI.

"I wandered forth, the fanciful upbraiding
Of Dian haunting me; but day by day
Its influence passed away,
And I grew more myself. A planet fading
Leaves the sky darker, and my vision's flight
Sunk me in denser night.

XLII.

"I cared no more for beauty: my endeavor
Was to forget it. In the throng I grew
Like others, and in new
Excitements sought to drown the past—to sever
My close-linked memories. 'Twas a struggle: still
Passion succumbed to Will.

XLIII.

"So, the Immortal faded in the Human:
I saw my folly, and became—a man.
The dreams that over-ran
My boyish soul were dead, and, thenceforth, woman
Was hateful to me—from her lustrous charms
I fled to deeds of arms.

XLIV.

"Returning, I am king: perhaps, am better
And wiser by the change from what I was,
For life's eternal buzz
Has silenced fancy's follies. I am debtor,
As all are, to the world: each something owes
For what her hand bestows.

XLV.

"Henceforth, I live to pay that debt. To-morrow
Will make thee mine, sweet Chromia; and thy hours
Shall be as banks of flowers
Born under summer kisses. Never sorrow
Shall reach thee—never, never! In a spot,
Hard by a haunted grot—"

XLVI.

"Haunted by one, who died, they say, forsaken,—
A poor, pale Nereid, that like vernal snow
Before Apollo's glow,
Dissolved with love—where earliest birds awaken,
And where the dappled deer delight to come,
Is built our future home.

XLVII.

"Look up, Divinest! Nor with mute upbraiding
Punish forgotten folly. Sweet, look up:
Love still will wreathe life's cup
With roses for us. So! 'Tis well, this fading
Of what should not be—sorrow.—Dimly burn
The stars. Let us return."

XLVIII.

Chromia arose, doubting, but uncomplaining,
And smiling as she went, yet as she passed
Each open vista, cast
Her glances on the moon: the orb was waning
And lustreless, and wreathed with hazy clouds—
The stars were in their shrouds.

XLIX.

——It was a radiant sunset: such a glory
As only glows in Grecia's golden heaven
Illumed the brow of even:
The amber rivers, famed in mythic story,
The grassy meadows, and the hoary woods,—
Primeval solitudes,—

L.

The rocky glens, adorned with vernal splendor,
The mountains, crowned with beeches, waving green,
With the whole sylvan scene,
Caught from the skies a mellow tint and tender
That slowly faded as the purple night
Stood silently in sight.

LI.

The stars shone out, lighting a lovely valley
Slumbrous, save in the shouts of merriment
That heaven-ward, hymn-like, went
From happy youths and maids who musically
Moved to the magic of the poet's rhyme,
Or to the cymbal's chime.

LII.

A shadowy grove behind them threw a palace
In bold relief; and, circling them, a lawn
Lay, lit, as though with dawn,
By rays from shrines where many a jewelled chalice,
Mirroring their flames, threw back the mimic blaze
Far through the forest ways.

LIII.

Before the building stood two pines which mounted
Gigantic toward the stars,—two ancient trees
The haunts of Dryades,
Of the dim days of old. Meanwhile, uncounted,
The hours expired in song, and the full moon
Rose, crimson as in June.

LIV.

Reposing on a rustic throne, enfolding
Recovered Chromia, lay the new-made king—
Love charming every thing
That moved around—delighted at beholding
His subjects' joy, and happy with the bride
Reclining at his side.

LV.

And still the moon arose majestically,
Till on the distant mountain's swarthy brow
She set her feet of snow;
While Latmos, looking on the silent valley,
Shone, like a god, arising on the night,
Crowned with Olympian light.

LVI.

At last she rose and staggered onward, flying
From maniac memory, while her lustrous eyes
Dropped diamonds down the skies.
Still glancing backward, loath to leave and sighing,
She went her way, and passing frowning Mars,
Walked onward through the stars.

LVII.

To where sat Chromia and her monarch lover,
Suddenly broke a crowd of blushing maidens,
With songs, whose every cadence,
Petitioned Venus to descend and hover
Above the twain. The gentle group had come
To lead the young bride home.

LVIII.

Torches had they, and every eye was beaming
Beneath them, as the hymeneäl song
Swelled from the lovely throng
When Chromia stood among them, although streaming
Athwart the group a dense and ebony gloom,
Fell, like the shade of doom.

LIX.

It was the long-drawn shadow of the pines that grimly
Stood in the moon. Away, away they flew,
Scattering the dreaming dew
That died as stars die, while their jewels dimly
Faded in distance as they danced along;
And last — expired their song.

LX.

Endymion watched them, with his manly bosom
Heaving with happiness, while his thankful eyes
Addressed the smiling skies:
Life, when he least expected, burst in blossom;
Music became the measure of his hours;
His paths were paths of flowers.

LXI.

Slowly by dim degrees the moon had floated
Above his throne, and on her countenance
Rested his passionate glance;
And she, returning feelings as devoted,
Trembled with pleasure, yielding sigh for sigh,
Under his loving eye.

LXII.

She gazed upon him, all the while beguiling
His heart from out his breast, and smiled, and smiled,
Till he was almost wild
With her calm loveliness — for in her smiling,
And in the intenseness of her glance, there shone
A passion like his own,—

LXIII.

A strange anxiety of look connected
As it were with him! Gazing, again, again—
Endeavoring, though in vain,
To dream its meaning, he reclined, dejected,
And drunk with wonder. Suddenly came the song
Of the returning throng!

LXIV.

"Endymion!" The charm was broken: he started
Like one aroused from sleep: "Endymion!"
He rose — "Endymion!"
Downward to earth his human feelings darted,
While, pallid, prey to anguish and dismay,
The moon pursued her way.

LXV.

Recovering, she rose above her grief and slowly
Walked toward the west: her rays were now aslant
His happy heart, the haunt
Of human joy by fervent love made holy,
Endymion sought his palace, and the one
Who thence was all his own.

LXVI.

Meanwhile above the pines the moon had floated,
And now between the twain her glances streamed
Downward, and brightly gleamed
Along the palace walls, like sun-light moted,
In one broad blaze, and, passing through the door,
Slept on the inner floor!

LXVII.

Just then Endymion with a heart whose lightness
Surprised him, passed the pines whose shadows lay
Densely athwart his way,
And reached the door. Sudden—within the brightness
A form opposed his path, her lifted hand
Eloquent with command!

LXVIII.

He started backward: when, like flowing water,
A voice, more musical than the melodious spheres,
Broke on his wondering ears;
And on the instant dread Latona's daughter,
Her glances falling, like a fountain, o'er him,
Stood—all the god—before him!

LXIX.

"Endymion," was the cadence, modulated
To such a strain of golden harmony
As syrens on the sea
Murmur by moon-light, "king of Caria, fated
By thine own folly to a fearful doom,
Thou treadest on thy tomb."

LXX.

"Speak ere it closes on thee: yet dare not endeavor
To exculpate thyself, nor me deceive.
Why didst thou not believe?
Why foolishly forsake thy faith, and sever
Thyself from me? The punishment I gave
Endured but to the grave,

LXXI.

"And was deserved. And what was death? The portal
Whose ebony gates, unfolded once, had given
To thee the highest heaven
And me for ever. What sublime, immortal,
Transcendent joys were thine! ours, what delights,
What long — what passionate nights,

LXXII.

"What days of boundless love! But now how altered!
Thou art another's, and thy earthly mate
Awaits thee, and thy fate!
Go, thinking what if thou hadst never faltered,
Thy faith had gained — how pure, how rich the charms,
That panted for thine arms."

LXXIII.

Endymion stood aghast: her words were thunder,
Stunning his brain: naked as Truth, and vast
The dim, departed Past,
Returned upon him. Stricken dumb with wonder,
He gazed and gazed, his large, expanded eyes
Fixed with a blank surprise.

LXXIV.

"Wilt thou not live?" asked Dian — "live to sorrow?
Did I not tell thee, man, that never more
This side the Stygian shore
Shouldst thou fold woman's form, or else the morrow
Beheld thee dead? Forsake thy bride, and live!
Thus far will I forgive."

LXXV.

"Hear me!" Endymion cried, while passion kindled
His stony eyes. "Though I be crushed to dust,
Goddess, I will be just.
My heart, when first it lost thee, Dian, dwindled
To nothingness: thy anger was its knell,
And memory was its hell.

LXXVI.

"O! how I loved thee — nay, 'twas adoration,
My storm of passion — that I love thee now,
Is branded on my brow,
And in my heart that writhes in desolation—
Nay, interrupt me not: thou canst but kill,
And I will have my will.

LXXVII.

"Why should I not? Dian, I am thy equal:
Passion, in levelling thee, exalted me—
Passion, which like a sea,
O'erwhelmed us both. Behold the savage sequel
Of what, but for thy frown, had still been truth—
A blighted, blasted youth.

LXXVIII.

" How was it I betrayed thee? Dian, drunken
With luxury to which I was not born—
By thy high favor torn
From those, fate made my fellows. I had sunken,
Blind with my novel state, had I not spoken—
I did: the spell was broken.

LXXIX.

" Thou didst not caution me; my soul was cloven
With maddening doubt: so from thy error came
My punishment — my shame.
Did I deserve my fate, when thou hadst woven
This doubt around me, and, instead of light,
Had clothed my brain with night?

LXXX.

" Well, I was banished, and went forth, degraded,
Scorned and forlorn. Slowly, by slight degrees,
My mighty miseries
Beneath the burning sun of action, faded;
My now-awakened soul recoiled aghast
From the delusive Past.

LXXXI.

"Yet I remembered thee, but coldly deemed thee
Ideal only, — mythus of a soul,
Which, scorning all control,
Grasped at forbidden things: such, Dian, I dreamed thee,
And mine the vision that a distempered brain
Made, tottering on its wane."

LXXXII.

Endymion ceased; hope, palsied and despairing,
Declined in Dian's eyes. Her lips apart,
Her lofty Titan heart
Echoing his words, she stood, her features wearing
A marble fixedness,—a speechless glare,—
A grief too great to bear.

LXXXIII.

"The words of gods are never lightly spoken!"
She said at last, with cold and measured tone,
Speaking like breathing stone
But ere she closed, her voice was thick and broken:
"Endymion, leave thy bride!" she gasped, "and live!
Else I cannot forgive!"

LXXXIV.

"Abandon Chromia!" cried the monarch, "never!
I dare not — will not. Steep in agony
One always true to me!
The thought alone is crime. Thy word can sever
My thread of life: speak it: I dare defy
Thy malice, Dian, and die!"

LXXXV.

The goddess gasped for breath, with bosom swelling:
Her lips unclosed, while her large, luminous eyes
Blazing, like Stygian skies,
With passion, on the audacious youth were dwelling:
She raised her angry hand, that seemed to clasp
Jove's thunder in its grasp.

LXXXVI.

And then she stood in silence, fixed and breathless;
But presently the threatening arm slid down;
The fierce, destroying frown
Departed from her eyes, which took a deathless
Expression of despair, like Niobe's—
Her dead ones at her knees.

LXXXVII.

Slowly her agony passed, and an Elysian,
Majestic fervor, lit her lofty eyes,
Now dwelling on the skies:
Meanwhile, Endymion stood, cheek, brow, and vision,
Radiant with resignation, stern and cold,
In conscious virtue bold.

LXXXVIII.

Their glances met; his, while they trembled, showing
An earnestness of purpose; hers, a soul
Whence passion's wild control
Had passed for ever; while her whole form, glowing,
Resumed its stateliness: once more she stood
Erect, in all — the god!

LXXXIX.

"Monarch," she said, "I stooped to love, and, loving,
Was woman — like my sex; but never more—
Endymion, never more.
Even in fancy may I watch thee, roving
Thy native vales: my heart is parched with heat:
Earth crumbles at my feet!

XC.

"Go, and be happy: I, in my immortal,
Olympian home, will struggle to forget
That love, whose sun is set:
So, should I meet thee at its golden portal
In later days, it shall not be with love,
But like a child of Jove!"

XCI.

Endymion stood amazed—his pale face quivering
With wild emotion: "Life and Chromia mine!"
He murmured, "O! divine
Dian! great goddess!" but suddenly a shivering
Ran over his frame: joy, like a fierce disease,
Compelled him to his knees.

XCII.

"Farewell, Endymion," said the goddess, stooping,
Pressing with pallid lips upon his brow
A kiss of frozen snow,
And, mournfully turning, passed, her fair head drooping
Upon her snowy breast: "Farewell for ever—
For ever and for ever!"

XCIII.

Endymion, stretching forth his arms, endeavored
To clasp her garment's hem, but slowly, slowly
She waned, and vanished wholly,
And like a dream: the sudden silence severed
His heart from him: "Farewell," it breathed, "for ever!
For ever and for ever!"

XCIV.

He tottered forth: the door was clad with shadow,
Clothed by the pines: he could not bear the gloom;
It seemed a yawning tomb!
And, rushing thence, he trod the moon-lit meadow;
But still the silence sighed that sad "For ever—
For ever and for ever!"

XCV.

Both hands upon his brow—terror, and sadness,
And horror in his eyes, with speechless face,
He pierced the depths of space,
Glaring, like one struck dumb with sudden madness,
While in the distance died that sad "For ever!
For ever and for ever!"

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